

Pastoral Statement of the Bishops of Metro Manila

Bishops of Metro Manila outline 7 points to implement the government's declaration of community quarantine in Metro Manila to curb the spread of COVID-19. With the revised Oratio Imperata.

03/16/2020

Monday, 16 March 2020

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There is an appointed time for everything (Eccl. 3:1).

To the People of God in Metro Manila:

“*There is an appointed time for everything,*” (Eccl. 3:1) the Holy Bible says. Let us heed the signs of our time and respond to them appropriately. The government has declared a community quarantine in Metro Manila from March 15 to April 14 to stem the spread of COVID 19. We bishops of this region met to discuss common pastoral actions in the light of this development. We have been guided by fidelity to the faith, service to the people, and the common good of the community. After much discussion and discernment, we have decided on the following points which we will

implement in our ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Archdiocese of Manila, in the dioceses of Cubao, Novaliches, Pasig, Kalookan, Parañaque, parts of both the diocese of Antipolo and Malolos that belong to Metro Manila, and some parts of the Military Vicariate of the Philippines.

1. We will abide by the government's directive to suspend all large gatherings from March 15 to April 14. So there will be no celebration of the Holy Mass with a large congregation within this period, plus other religious activities during the Holy Week which usually attract huge crowds of the faithful. We heed the instruction of the CBCP which reads: *"We should continue to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and Holy Week liturgical celebrations even in the absence of a congregation. In spite of the fact that our faithful cannot be physically present in the Eucharistic*

celebration, the crisis gives us the opportunity to unite ourselves with one another in the bond of spiritual communion through the digital technology” (CBCP circular 20-14).

2. The Baptisms, Confirmations, and Weddings scheduled within these dates, which can no longer be postponed due to the enormity of the preparations involved, may push through, but will be subject to severe restrictions as to the number of participants and attendees, and proper social distancing should be observed. All other celebrations of these aforementioned sacraments are to be temporarily deferred.

3. Since the dates for the Metro Manila Community Quarantine will coincide with the last three Sundays of Lent, and Holy Week, it would mean that the liturgical celebrations during those days, including Palm Sunday, the rest of the Holy Week

and Easter Sunday will not be open to the public.

4. There will be no public blessing of palms, Visita Iglesia, Siete Palabras, Good Friday procession and Easter Salubong. We encourage the faithful to stay home and follow the said activities on TV, Radio, or online. The faithful are called upon to pray the Rosary as it is a good prayer to meditate on the mysteries of the life of the Lord that we intensely celebrate in the universal Church during the Holy Week.

5. We call for days of penance, prayer, and fasting during all the Fridays of Lent (March 20, 27, and April 3), including Good Friday (April 10). This is our response to the CBCP appeal: *“We are enjoining all the Local Ordinaries and the Diocesan Administrators to call for a Day of Prayer and Fasting for all those who are infected with the COVID-19 and*

those who have died, and for our deliverance from this pandemic”
(CBCP circular 20-14).

6. The month-long community quarantine will affect the poor and the daily wage earners heavily. Let our parishes and church institutions, in close coordination with their local government units (LGUs), be creative in going out of their way to help the people in their basic needs. We appeal for donations to help the poor and the sick.

7. Let the bells of our Churches be heard at 12 o'clock noon and 8 o'clock in the evening to call all the faithful to pray the Oratio Imperata together with the praying of the Angelus at noon and the family rosary in the evening. Let us all earnestly turn to the Lord in prayer. Together with the psalmist, let us pray: *“I love you, LORD, my strength, LORD, my rock, my fortress, my*

deliverer, My God, my rock of refuge, my shield, my saving horn, my stronghold!” (Ps. 18:2-3)

Our present situation is very fluid. For the moment these are our common actions in our dioceses. Other developments and subsequent instructions may come in the future. Let us all be vigilant. We offer to the Lord the difficulties and uncertainties that confront us in the spirit of Lent, which is the spirit of fervent prayer, penance and generosity. We are assured of Easter. Life will overcome death. This virus will pass us by. We say with St. Paul: “*We even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts*” (Rom. 5:3-5).

Let us entrust ourselves to the
maternal care of Mary, Mother of the
Afflicted.

Yours truly in Christ:

Most Rev. NOLLY C. BUCO

Auxiliary Bishop of Antipolo

Most Rev. PABLO VIRGILIO S. DAVID

Bishop of Kalookan

Most Rev. FRANCISCO M. DE LEON

Bishop of Antipolo

Most Rev. OSCAR L. FLORENCIO

Bishop of the Military Ordinariate of
the Philippines

Most Rev. ROBERTO O. GAA

Bishop of Novaliches

Most Rev. JESSE E. MERCADO

Bishop of Parañaque

Most Rev. BRODERICK S. PABILLO

Apostolic Administrator Archdiocese
of Manila

Most Rev. HONESTO F. ONGTIOCO

Bishop of Cubao

Most Rev. MYLO HUBERT C.
VERGARA

Bishop of Pasig

Most Rev. DENNIS C. VILLAROJO

Bishop of Malolos

16 March 2020

REVISED ORATIO IMPERATA

AGAINST THE SPREAD OF THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE

*to be prayed every day at 12:00 P.M.
and 8:00 P.M.*

God our Father,

we come to you in our need

to ask your protection against the
COVID-19

that has disturbed and even claimed
lives.

We pray that you guide the people
tasked to find cures for this disease
and to stem its transmission.

Protect the medical experts

that they may minister to the sick
with competence and compassion.

We pray for those afflicted.

May they be restored to health soon.

Protect those who care for them.

Grant eternal rest to those who have died.

Give us the grace in this trying time

to work for the good of all and to help those in need.

We implore you to stop the spread of this virus

And to save us from our fears.

Grant all these through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son

who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

One God, for ever and ever. Amen.

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

Do not despise our petition in our necessities,

But deliver us always from all dangers,

O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

Our Lady, health of the sick, pray for us.

St. Raphael the Archangel, pray for us.

St. Rock, pray for us.

St. Lorenzo Ruiz, pray for us.

St. Pedro Calungsod, pray for us.
